

WHAT COLOUR ARE THE GREYS?

Martin S. Kottmeyer

GREY. Naturally. What a silly question. Except, you may be sure, when they are not. And that happens more than one might like. For while, in the natural world, bluejays are never red and redbirds are never blue, it is not at all unusual for greys to be not-grey.

As grey is a blend of black and white, we are not likely to be surprised to find bracketing extremes where people report entities having the standard form, but with the colour as either pure white or shiny black. And, indeed, such cases do exist. In 1983, a UFO percipient named Robert Carlson was visited by several beings with large heads bulging with veins and a mere one and a half feet tall. "Their skin was shiny black." (1)

In 1991, three teenagers near Springfield, Missouri saw a humanoid with the requisite traits of huge pear-shaped head, large black almond-shaped eyes, long thin arms, and a height of only four and a half feet. "It was described as completely white in colour." (2) In December 1996, a young girl of Miami, Florida saw a small man-like figure with a large light-bulb head and huge almond-shaped black eyes. This being was white in colour, too. (3) There have been enough cases at this extreme to have led the French ufologist Eric Zurcher to report in 1979 that the big-headed dwarfs seen in France as a group typically had skin that was very white, rather than grey. (4)

Some manage to stretch the range. In Argentina in 1991, several people saw a one metre tall, large-headed figure that tried to hide behind a tree. It was initially milky white in colour, but when several similar humanoids, also like large naked babies, joined him, they all emitted a phosphorescent white light. (5)

And then there are those cases where the being has so little colour it is either transparent or invisible. In a Russian case from 1993, a university student saw two figures floating in the air outside.

They had large elongated heads with large fiery red eyes. Their bodies were thin and tall and there were long hands with three fingers. The bodies were transparent. (6) Debbie Tomey reports a figure that was standing in the cascade of water flowing from a rain gutter. It was evidently a bald-headed humanoid but was invisible! (7)

We are also not likely to be shocked by the presence of browns among greys, since it is such a common colour not only among humans, but throughout the animal kingdom. In February 1985, a Fort Wayne, Indiana resident ticked off the typical grey-type humanoid traits – short, large head, huge

black oval eyes – but the skin looked "tanned" or bronze-faced. (8) A West Dade County, Florida case set in January 1997 has a lady called Beth C report seeing a pair of three foot tall beings with large heads and dark, oval eyes whose skin is similarly described as tan-coloured. (9)

In a July 1990 encounter, a skinny, large-headed, big-eyed, slit-mouthed entity is described as light brown coloured. (10) The Joe & Carol abduction, set near Goodland, Kansas, involves beings a few inches shorter than Joe with long and skinny arms, a skull-like head with a nose like a small lump, no nose, no mouth and round, deep-set eyes. Its skin looks coarse and light brown around the face, but the body is dark brown. (11) Brown-skinned greys appeared in a December 1998 case set in

Moline, Illinois. (12) In this category, the strangest must be a January 1995 encounter in Pitahaya, Puerto Rico. The little body was basically beige-brown, but includes the detail that it involved brown and black spots that seemed to interlace. The large oval eyes also strayed from grey norms by being angled vertically on the face. (13)

We can reinforce the presence of these variants by bringing in Leonard Stringfield's medical



authorities who showed some interesting diversity of observations about the typical body retrieved from saucer crashes. While we get standard traits of large hairless heads, when we get to the skin we are told "Some claim beige, tan, brown, tannish or pinkish grey and one said it looked almost bluish-grey under deep freezer lights. In two instances, the bodies were charred to a dark brown. The texture is described as scaly or reptilian, and as stretchable, elastic, or mobile over smooth muscle or skeletal tissue." (14)

In October 1996, an experiencer in an abductee support group found himself sitting on a couch next to a naked alien. It had large eyes, was thin, but had a human skin tone that was bright pink like a baby. He was egged on by another man in the room, "Well, go ahead and ask him a question, hybrid." He did, but the answer was too complicated and bizarre. (15) That same month, a gentleman named Norberto Del Valle had an encounter near Isabella, Puerto Rico that involved something that sounds very much like a classic grey: short, a large head with large protruding veins, large round dark eyes, a fragile body, long thin arms and fingers. But the skin is described as pinkish-white and very rough textured resembling a salamander. (16)

In May 1992, Katherine Francovich of South Dade County, Florida sees a small humanoid standing by a tree that fits a grey in many of the particulars: The top of the head is disproportionately wide; the eyes are huge, black, and almond-shaped, with no whites or pupils visible. It had two tiny nostrils. The ears were small, low, and flat against the head. The lips were small and not well-defined. It had a very slender frame; very long, very skinny arms without muscles. It had a thin neck. It is admittedly non-classical, however, in certain respects. The legs were over-developed and bulging. It had a small potbelly. It had six-fingered hands. For our purposes, the interesting thing is the skin is greyish-pink. It is also non-porous and nearly like plastic. (17) This begins to get a little odd. A slightly richer hue seems implied in a Puerto Rico case alleging Park Rangers are part of the retrievalist conspiracy. One of them offers a photo of a big-headed, big-eyed short humanoid on a stretcher that shows the grey skin has "a rose tone". (18)

Moving a notch across the spectrum, a May 1996 abduction experience reinforcing the existence of the Hybrid programme describes some hairless, six-foot tall beings, with large black oval slanted eyes. One of them holds a glowing container with an embryo that the experiencer felt was implanted into her. They wear clear robes through which she can see the beings are light orange! (19) With this, we are

getting into an area of the spectrum less visited by the natural world.

Longstanding readers of *Magonia* will recall that the case of Norman Harrison revealed a race from Epsilon Eridani described as "4 ft. tall on average, spindly and yellowish skinned, totally devoid of hair. The heads are disproportionately large due to evolved brain capacity." (20) In a more recent instance, a Spanish farmer named Samuel Cosme encounters a small humanoid with huge shiny black eyes and a large head that is also described as yellowish in colour. It is floating in the air above his tomato patch accompanied by a propeller sound. He runs and gets his sons and they all experience the humanoid staring at them intently – arguably, typical grey behaviour. (21)

A pair of short humanoids with yellowish skin appeared before a lady in her patio rocking chair in Bellomonte, Guaynabo, Puerto Rico on 11 March 1992. They had otherwise familiar grey traits like large egg-shaped heads, wide lipless mouths, eyes resembling large dark slits. They were inspecting the plants and terrain and telepathically requested she plant different types of trees and flowers in her garden. (22) In November 1993, some yellowish-skinned entities were sighted under an obscure overpass along state Road I-19 near Casa Grande, Arizona. They were short and had the requisite large, pear-shaped head and huge oval-shaped eyes. Oddly they seemed to be quivering with either surprise or irritation. (23)

Though there are persistent denials among ufologists that ufonauts are ever green, in fact there are the inevitable rule-breakers. In his study of pre-1985 abductions Bullard reported finding no fewer than 10 cases of green colouring among the abducting humanoids, though we should warn that this is not broken down by type. (24) It is not at all difficult to find UFO cases involving green-skinned humanoids that display features that in other circumstances would lead one to classify them as grey. It is tempting to consider this colour variant as nearly a commonplace. Looking through the *Albert Rosales Humanoid Catalogue* will give you about ten cases, though I will grant you a few stretch grey definitions.

In a March 1991 case on the Kuwait border with Iraq, a sheep farmer saw a saucer land from which a group of thirteen 4-foot tall beings emerged. They were apparently naked, had huge heads and very thin bodies. Their eyes were the now standard large black almond variety. The hands and feet were webbed. They were described as pale green in colour. They communicated via telepathy, telling the man he

would not be harmed. They even allowed him to take photos, though their whereabouts are unknown. (25)

On 13 August 1992, a woman of Salem, Oregon, Helen Harris, encountered in her kitchen a short, hairless figure with an elongated head. There were large "eyelids" drawn over the eyes. No mouth was seen. There was no discernable clothing. It was greenish-grey. She tried communicating with it telepathically, but it quickly vanished. Twenty minutes later a greenish three-fingered hand suddenly appeared from behind her. Its touch had the slight painful quality of an electric shock or injection and a round red mark appeared on her wrist a couple of days later. (26)

Also in August 1992, six independent witnesses of Colinas Del Yunque, Puerto Rico saw two short, four-foot tall beings, with heads somewhat larger than normal. They had very thin long arms. The skin was a shiny light green. Oddly, though, the heads had stringy light-brown hair and they wore white shorts with a red stripe on the side. One gave the two-finger "peace" sign as they walked by. This happened in broad daylight and of course invites thoughts of these merely being school kids involved in a prank. (27)

On 27 June 1993 a lady in the Adirondacks region of New Jersey sees some very bright lights and then several tall thin humanoids. They had black eyes, a pronounced brow ridge, and folds on the forehead and beside the eyes that she felt fascinated by. They are grey-green. (28) The next month, in Cancun, Mexico, a vacationer falling asleep sees three small – three and a half feet tall – green humanoids. They have the standard large heads, thin bodies, and large dark eyes and are naked. They paralyse the witness. (29) In West Palm Beach, Florida a woman is transported in a military-type truck to a secret facility. There she meets a three-foot tall being with a greenish-grey complexion. It had slanted eyes and seemed to hover just above the floor. It pokes at her with an unseen instrument and when she resists she blacks out. (30)

In 1994, a woman of Adelaide, South Australia has a vivid recollection of lying naked on a cold, metallic table. Her knees are drawn up and the legs separated. Four or five beings surrounding her have large heads and thin bodies. The eyes are the modern form: huge, shaped like black almonds, and looking at her. One looks directly into her face. They have thin slit mouths, no lips, two holes for a nose, and the ears are tiny. But the body colour has a green tinge. (31)

On 27 September 1997, Nelson Cortes and his brother Josue around Punta Palma, Puerto Rico

see some short green humanoids exit a round craft. The standard features are the large heads, thin bodies, long skinny arms and large dark oval shaped eyes. Non-standard, however, are huge pointy ears and potbellies. Anachronistically, for the nineties, they also wear tight-fitting metallic helmets. The witnesses screamed and they ran back into the craft and took off. (32) We could add some older cases, but you get the idea. Greys are sometimes green.

They can also be blue. On 24 July 1990 a bus driver near the village of Kisbajcs, Hungary sees a short humanoid next to a pair of powerful red lights. It had the necessary pear-shaped head, large slanted eyes, and extremely long dangling arms. The figure's body was described as steel blue in colour. (33) In mid-1991, amid a flap in Puerto Rico, a woman was visited in her bedroom by short, large-headed humanoids with black oval-shaped eyes. The colour of the skin is grey-blue. They gave her a herbal remedy to give to her daughter who was in the hospital with a kidney ailment. (34) In November 1996, a young boy of Kiara, Western Australia was visited in his room by several beings with large, hairless heads, thin bodies, thin arms, small mouths. They had holes where the nose and ears would be. Their colour is greyish blue. They took him on several occasions to an "airport" where he was introduced to a little girl with blonde hair. (35)

Completing the spectrum, we come to a case dated 26 March 1995 and set in Orocovis, Puerto Rico. Jaime Torres sees on a tree branch a short humanoid creature with a large hairless head. Among the standard grey features are large slanted eyes, a small mouth, pointed chin, and long thin arms. The legs, however, are thick and have four claw-like appendages. The skin bore several colours that included grey on the facial area, maroon, yellow, and purple. That's right, folks. We even got purple! (36) So there you have it, fully referenced and ripe for pondering. This statement is true:

Greys come in every colour of the spectrum.

UFO apologists, we can be quite sure, will tell you there is nothing absolutely impossible about greys being so full-spectral in their pigmentation. Birds, taken as a class, exhaust the artist's palette in their use of colour. Domestic cats and dogs display fairly broad ranges of coloration: black to white and varying shades of yellow and brown. Humans, too, are not entirely without a fair degree of variation as is implicit in the terms used for the various races – blacks, whites, reds for Indians, the yellow peril applied to the orient.

At least one ufologist, Linda Howe, has noticed the wide range of colours and suggests the varying colour shades are a function of various metabolisms and/or abilities to interact or not interact with the light spectrum of our sun. The green ones may point to "the chlorophyll-like fluid mentioned in alleged government autopsy reports". (37)

So what if aliens are widely diverse in skin coloration. Surely, we should not take ufologists so literally when they talk about the boring uniformity of alien encounters as to think this consistency should apply to the skin tones of the greys. Still, this little exercise demonstrates variation taken to the max. We have the entire spectrum here. Quibbling ufologists could perhaps insist there should yet be further incremental tints and hues, neon black-light effects, zebra stripes, plaids and tie-dye patterns; but I trust the rainbow is enough for most folks. Such a broad range of variation insists on the presence of myth. Is it proof? Admittedly, no. No reasoning person would regard this as a decisive test to show greys are fictitious as opposed to real. It's another probability thing, as per usual.

We are, however, still left with a nagging issue. Should we be calling humanoids with big bald heads and slight bodies greys when there is this much variation in skin colour? My personal feeling is we should not. I quickly admit there is no chance of changing habits at this late date given how much we all use the term, myself included. But, I would like to nudge folks to start thinking about finding some acceptably simple, but more accurate alternative label for the form.

Clearly, humanoid is not precise enough. Bald big-headed dwarfs leaves out the tall slender variants and is a bit chunky for regular use. I rather like a term I once ran across in science fiction fandom – Brainoid. This follows common practice of ending alien labels with -oid: insectoid, reptoid, ursinoid, freakazoid and so forth. This would emphasise how the brain is the organising principle to the form. I feel that most people will agree a large brain is far more essential to any case being considered a grey than skin colour. The big brain is partly responsible for the diminished body and also for the personality commonly being less than fully human, i.e. the emotionless quality of big-brained entities. It could also pull into its framework those cases where the alien is a disembodied brain. Brainoids, though, never caught on among SF fans for some reason. I will readily defer to something better and catchier if anybody can come up with one. Any thoughts?

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NOTES AND NEWS

from Nigel Watson

In *The Dominion of the Air: The Story of Aerial Navigation* the Rev. J. M. Bacon (1902) notes how throughout history there have been charlatans who claimed they were able to fly or knew the secret of flight. He goes on to say that in medieval times flying to the multitudes meant flying saints and dragons, and as a consequence:

We can picture the scene at a "flying séance." On the one side the decidedly professional showman possessed of sufficient low cunning; on the other the ignorant and highly superstitious audience, eager to hear or see some new thing – the same audience that, deceived by a simple trick of schoolboy science, would listen to supernatural voices in their groves, or oracular utterances in their temples, or watch the urns of Bacchus fill themselves with wine. Surely for their eyes it would need no more than the simplest phantasmagoria, or maybe only a little black thread, to make a pigeon rise and fly.

It is interesting to note, however, that in the case last cited there is unquestionably an allusion to some crude form of firework, and what more likely or better calculated to impress the ignorant! Our firework makers still manufacture a "little Devil". Pyrotechnic is as old as history itself; we have an excellent description of a rocket in a document at least as ancient as the ninth century. And that a species of pyrotechnics was resorted to by those who sought to imitate flight we have proof in the following recipe for a flying body given by a Doctor, eke a Friar, in Paris in the days of our King John: – "Take one pound of sulphur, two pounds of willow carbon, six pounds of rock salt ground very fine in a marble mortar. Place, when you please, in a covering made of flying papyrus to produce thunder. The covering in order to ascend and float away should be long, graceful, well filled with this fine powder; but to produce thunder the covering should be short, thick, and half full."

Nor does this recipe stand alone. Take another sample, of which chapter and verse are to be found in the MSS of a Jesuit, Gaspard Schott, of Palermo and Rome, born three hundred years ago: – "The shells of hen-eggs, if properly filled and well secured against the penetration of the air, and exposed to solar rays, will ascend to the skies and sometimes suffer a natural change. And if the eggs of the larger

description of swans, or leather balls stitched with fine thongs, be filled with nitre, the purest sulphur quicksilver, or kindred materials which rarefy by their caloric energy, and if they externally resemble pigeons, they will easily be mistaken for flying animals."

As we can see in every age there are plenty of people willing to exploit the gullibility of the public. The reasons for doing this can be for financial gain; to create an entertainment; to reinforce their own delusional ideology; a need to feel superior to the 'ignorant masses'; or, to prove an hypothesis. Sometimes it's a combination of all of these factors.

The masses are not necessarily ignorant but they can be persuaded to believe all sorts of weird things if the "illusionist" exploits a current popular obsession. In this context the contactees of the 1950s quickly jumped onto the flying saucer bandwagon and took it far beyond the realms of 'nuts and bolts' ufology clung to by the likes of Donald Keyhoe.

In the 1970s the equivalent of the flying pigeon séance was Uri Geller's incredible spoon bending feats. His "performances" have provided plenty of speculation and entertainment, which offer some kind of proof for his more outlandish contactee claims. Before he came along no one in ufology would ever have guessed that cutlery would have any connection with the Space People!

Today, rather than bending spoons the ever-more complex appearances of crop circles are the alien equivalent of text messages. Yet, as the machinations of the aliens become increasingly weird, the perception of our own human abilities and achievements are downplayed. This has gone so far that NASA has now decided to commission a book to prove that they really did land men on the moon. This is all well and good but I spot a conspiracy here – why haven't they commissioned a book to prove that flying saucers don't exist?

Those with long memories will recall the USAF sponsored Project Blue Book that sought to explain away flying saucers, but their findings only stoked-up the controversy and muddled the waters even more. So I think NASA are fighting a losing battle. They would have been better off making a dead pigeon fly into the sky – now that would have impressed the masses as they well knew back in medieval times.



Peter J. Morris. *Aliens Amongst Us – A Beginner's Guide*, Hodder & Stoughton, 1999

This is a handsome little book. I like the size and feel of it and the type fonts. There is no denying it is indeed a beginner's guide. The book basically clues the reader into the main themes and images of the UFO phenomenon, but with a minimum of discussion. The descriptions of cases tend to be perfunctory with no arrows to the doubts that exist around specific incidents. He describes the claims of Lear, Lazar, and Cooper in a context that suggests they are mythology, but he offers no direction to where the doubts have been laid down. Morris himself states some doubts about the ETH and leans to accepting the idea that UFOs are basically related to the Earth in some manner. He accepts Constable's 'critters' as accounting for thousands of cases and there is talk about races within the Earth in a manner which suggests he does not think it as absurd as most people do. There is a New Age tilt shown in sections that suggest exercises for the reader involving meditation. As this is directed at beginners, I feel there is not enough warning that this might be a waste of time and indeed not a good idea. Haven't we seen enough self-deception in this field already to welcome more people to imagine up visits with aliens predicting yet another apocalypse?

There are occasional bits of nonsense sprinkled about. We are told for example that not just Icke, but Carl Sagan, argued a closer evolutionary connection between humans and reptiles than humans and apes. Charitably, Morris has a very garbled understanding of Sagan's writings if he believes that. We are told Adamski only started offering photos after the space race was undercutting his stories of Venusians and moon bases. Actually, people savvy in astronomy doubted Adamski from Day One and photos were tendered well before Sputnik. MJ-12 is passingly mentioned as though it was an undoubtedly real group. Penfield is described as stimulating the brain with electromagnetic waves

LITERARY CRITICISM

Reviews by Martin S. Kottmeyer

in his experiments, but, no, he used wires inserted into the brain that guided electric current to the site of stimulation. The Mars face is seemingly regarded as offering the "firmest evidence yet" of intelligent life elsewhere in the solar system, but that is rejected even by a number of pro-ETH ufologists.

The book closes with the sentiment that the author very much doubts aliens will walk down our streets in broad daylight as members of human society. The evidence will always be out of reach and just small enough to tempt us to walk the path toward new beliefs. Fair enough, but are those beliefs worth the trek?

William Aischuler. *The Science of UFOs*, A Byron Preiss Book, 2001.

There are reasons to both like and hate this book. On the happy side there is a reasonably good discussion of the problems of interstellar travel and how they impact on the idea that extraterrestrials are visiting us. There are a few good pages on the ways that extraterrestrials could prove their alien origins if they were of a mind to want to. There are a few paragraphs devoted to why the Breeding Programme theory makes no sense to the author. One can also get a good feel for the doubtful character of claiming aliens come from other dimensions or universes if one takes such New Age expressions too literally.

Sadly, the book doesn't do very well when actually discussing UFO reports. There are a number of rather silly errors. He mistakenly states Adamski said his aliens came from Vega. He falsely states that the craft in the Hill abduction had landed in the consciously remembered version of the experience before hypnosis. In fact, the craft was airborne when Barney tore off the binoculars and sped off. He misunderstands Project Mogul's role in the Roswell fiasco – claiming the weather balloon explanation was a cover story to hide the Cold War project. In truth, the weather balloon explanation was believed and given sincerely, based on the look of the debris.

Nobody prevailed upon the participants to lie. Mogul personnel did not even realise at the time that the Roswell crash involved their equipment. He suggests the 1991 Medjugorje, Yugoslavia photo might be an experimental aircraft, but anyone reading the testimony would surely realise it is a photo of a kite. He also states at one point that no alien abduction accounts mention ark-ecologies, but, in point of fact, there are reports consistent with the idea. Early in the book, he quotes a 1998 opinion from *Popular Mechanics* that the Ralph Ditter photo “remains unexplained to this day”. But Alschuler somehow forgets to bring up the matter of Ditter’s confession.

Alschuler seems poorly informed about other ufological critics. Rather shockingly, he discusses the Linda Cortile case in a manner that suggests he has never heard of George Hansen’s critique of the weaknesses surrounding the case. He judges the Phoenix flares case to be “unresolved” which I doubt anyone aware of Tim Printy’s comprehensive review of the arguments could say with a straight face. In a brief paragraph he discounts the muteness problem as involving human slashers and shows no awareness of the work of Kagan and Summers. Strangely, he talks about how there are tests like isotopic ratio analysis that could be performed on materials from the Roswell crash, if ever found; yet ignores the fact that such a test had in fact been performed on an alleged fragment by the Los Alamos National Laboratory in 1996. Why would he fail to discuss this if he had been reading the works of other critics? The bibliography at the end of the book in fact shows little awareness of the critical literature on Roswell – e.g. Kent Jeffrey’s paper, Saler-Ziegler-Moore’s book, Kal Korff’s and Karl Pflock’s writings, among others.

It also seems peculiar that in a discussion recommending researchers to study the existing literature, he favours mention of atmospheric optics works by Minnaert and Greenler. They are fine and lovely books which I would recommend to any science-minded individual, but I can’t say they would be all that helpful to the average UFO researcher. His bibliography omits far more useful works – the Condon report, Allan Hendry’s *UFO Handbook*, Tim Printy’s website, Ron Story’s *Space-Gods Revealed* and his *Encyclopedias*, Michael Crowe’s and Steven J. Dick’s histories of extraterrestrial speculations and many more.

So, is it thumbs up or thumbs down? I go very unenthusiastically thumbs up. The discussion of future science works well enough as an effort to expand the tradition of Arthur Clarke, Bob Forward, and the stable of science-writers for *Analog* into the

field of ufology. The tragedy is he never discovered the tradition of criticism of UFO claims necessary to make this a work of science in the fullest sense.

Timothy Mitchell. *It Came from Inner Space: Faith, Science, Conquest and the War of the Worlds*, Georgetown University PhD thesis, 106 pp. [http://cct.georgetown.edu/thesis/Timothy Mitchell.pdf](http://cct.georgetown.edu/thesis/TimothyMitchell.pdf)

The most useful aspect about this work is a series of observations about how *The War of the Worlds* was altered across its various manifestations from book to radio to movie to television. The academese and references to contemporary theory are a bit off-putting, but doubtless a nod to Mitchell’s teachers. There is some effort to tie things into the abduction mythos that looks strained in places, but may warrant temporary consideration.

David E. Fisher and Marshall Jon Fisher. *Strangers in the Night: A Brief History of Life on Other Worlds*, Counterpoint, 1998

All of this will doubtless be too familiar from other works in recent years that have covered the debate over the existence of extraterrestrial life. We already have the writings of Crowe covering the Martian canals in full detail. Croswell’s *Planet Quest* covered the matter of pulsar planets and such. Steven Dick pretty much tells everything else in here like the radio searches in greater detail. There are occasional bits and pieces that may not be covered in these other works. It has a section on Europa that tells the story of possible life in its ocean better than elsewhere. It discusses the history of life in meteorites before the Mars rock in a useful way. This book touches UFOs very lightly – 3 pages – mentions only Arnold and Roswell and says nothing that will interest buffs. It’s not a bad book – the science is doubtless all proper and the writing is brisk – but there’s not enough to recommend it if you are already conversant in the subject.

Daniel Pick. *Svengali’s Web: The Alien Enchanter in Modern Culture*, Yale University, 2000

A very fine commentary on the legend of Svengali. People still use the word as an all-purpose synonym for people who have artful control over the minds of others. Most of us no longer know the story for there has been no good dramatisation in decades. It is thus eye-opening to be reminded just how incredibly popular the story was and how much a mass cultural sensation it came to be. Myriad numbers of products emerged to cash in on the names of the characters. The story spawned many imitations and parodies.

Much of Pick's book is devoted to the back story of the themes of hypnotic or mesmeric mind control in the centuries leading up to the story. There is a surprising bit of material devoted to the powers of foreigners to cloud people's judgements, notably people of Jewish descent, though also others like Orientals. Pick notes the name Svengali may have been partly chosen to suggest an allusion to the Bengali. There is also much about the evil eye discussed here, including reminders of how routinely we speak of the penetrating eyes of foreign leaders, like we did of Hitler and Mussolini.

Pick notes that in the story Svengali himself was an ambiguous villain. The musical starlet herself was in need of someone who could draw the music from her. Without him, she was talentless. He, in turn, was in need of her. This tale was in part based on prior history. People of questionable nature in the music trade often made it possible for people to refine their talent and become stars. This theme has been replayed numerous times in contemporary culture – Elvis and Colonel Parker perhaps most famously. How much the legend is imposed and how much the actual relationship lends itself naturally to the formula are matters inevitably unresolvable to the average audience member.

Oh, despite the alien in the subtitle, there is nothing about extraterrestrials in this book. Alien here equals foreigner. Certain aspects of UFO mythology could be illuminated by material in it, however.



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EDITORIAL

Issue No. 41 of this publication was devoted to discussing the ETH and the lack of evidence to support it. This provoked the usual knee-jerk reactions from members of the UFO UpDates mailing list, including some who had obviously not even bothered to read it before mailing their comments.

One of the points I made, and not for the first time, was about the impossibility of the evidence for ET spacecraft being kept secret. The ETH, at least as it is interpreted by many ufologists, depends on persuading people to believe that it is possible to keep the saucers secret. Stanton Friedman commented:

"The naivety shown by the notion that we would have access to radar and spy satellite info, re space and airborne uncorrelated targets produced by the Aerospace Defense Command and NRO satellites and collected by NSA while listening to their foreign equivalents is monumental.

"Just note that more than 95% of the 156 UFO documents released by the NSA are whited out. No way that is all sources and methods data."

I replied, pointing out that he hadn't told us how UFO information gathered from radar or satellites, by governments and private organisations, amateur or professional, everywhere in the world is kept secret. I also wondered how he knew what was in the whited out parts of the UFO documents, as he implies that this hidden information concerns evidence for alien spacecraft. If the sceptics indulge in "research by proclamation" as Friedman constantly tells us, then surely he is indulging in research by showmanship in waving whited-out documents at UFO conferences.

Anyway, I intend to press for a plausible explanation as to how every government in the world has managed to preserve the Secret of the Saucers for over 50 years. I will probably have to wait a long time.